expedition, because Adam hated to advance the money. He said he always had a lot of trouble getting it back from our skin-flint manager. Parsimonious Pat. He probably didn't even have any.

I'd given everyone ten dollars spending money. None of them had spent any of it however. Their money went farther at McDonald's. Adam and I had spent most of our allowances playing the rigged games of chance. Then everyone had boarded the polar express. It whipped around very fast, but never got off the ground. I remember the sight of Frederick (not Fred) and Karl, their mouths wide open, eyes wide open too, clenching the bar in front of them as their long hair lashed their faces and the train took off.

I asked Adam what made him so tired. He said the pain in his knees kept him awake. I could sense him gauging whether or not to be open and deciding he would be. I think it had do with the spirit of the outing. It was palpable to me, and probably to him too. It was something families did. The last time I'd gone was forty years ago, when I was no older than Adam when he came here. I even arrived by water, or at least we crossed over the water on the little bridge at the entrance to the grounds. My family had been together then. At least we did things together, as a family. My father was with us. I hadn't been there since that day forty years ago, but things seemed familiar: the layout of the grounds, the stuffed animals, the proximity of the lake. I had returned as a member of a family. I was with Adam.